

In Baghdad, Sunni and Shi'a leaders in one of the city's most divided neighborhoods recently signed an agreement to halt sectarian violence and end attack on coalition forces.

In Anbar, Sunni sheikhs hosted Shi'a sheikhs from Karbala Province to discuss security and express their unity. And I can assure you—as can the soldiers who have been in Iraq—that 1 year ago such an event was unthinkable.

In Diyala Province, tribal groups come together for the first time to foster reconciliation. I'm going to tell you a story of interest to me. Extremists had kidnaped a group of Sunni and Shi'a leaders from Diyala; one of them was shot dead. According to a tribal spokesman, the extremists offered to release the Shi'a sheikhs, but not the Sunnis. And the Shi'as refused, unless their Sunni brothers were released as well. The next day, most of the hostages were rescued, and their captors are now in custody.

And the point I make is that given time and space, the normal Iraqi will take the necessary steps to put—fight for a free society. After all, 12 million people voted for freedom, 12 million people endorsed a democratic Constitution. And it's in our interest we help them succeed. It's in our interest we help freedom prevail. It's in our interest we deny safe haven to killers who at one time killed us in America. It's in our interest to show the world that we've got the courage and the determination necessary to spread the foundation for peace, and that is what we're here to honor today.

We're making progress, and many have contributed to the successes. And foremost among them are the men and women of the United States Army. Once again, American soldiers have shown the world why our military is the finest fighting force on Earth. And now that legacy falls to the proud graduates today. Earlier generations of soldiers from Fort Jackson made their way to Europe and liberated a continent from tyranny. Today, a new generation is following in their noble tradition. And one day, people will speak of your achievements in Baqubah and Baghdad the way we now speak of Normandy and the Bulge.

This post was named for a great American President. He served his country in two

major conflicts, including the American Revolution at the age of 13. Andrew Jackson was renowned for his courage, and that courage lives on at the base that bears his name. Troops from Fort Jackson have served with honor and distinction in today's war on terror, and some have not lived to make the journey home. And today we honor their sacrifices. We pray for their families. We remember what they fought for, and we pledge to finish the job.

And you are the ones who will carry on their work. Americans are counting on you, and their confidence is well placed. You've trained hard. You've prepared for battle. And when you take up your missions, you will give a new meaning to the slogan chanted by thousands of soldiers on this base in many wars and in many era: "Victory starts here."

May God bless you all, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Col. Reginald W. Cotton, commander, 3d Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, Fort Jackson, SC, who introduced the President; Brig. Gen. James H. Schwitters, commanding general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Brian L. Carlson, post command sergeant major, U.S. Army Training Center & Fort Jackson, SC; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the "Water Resources Development Act of 2007"

November 2, 2007

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 1495, the "Water Resources Development Act of 2007."

This bill lacks fiscal discipline. I fully support funding for water resources projects that will yield high economic and environmental returns to the Nation and each year my budget has proposed reasonable and responsible funding, including \$4.9 billion for 2008, to support the Army Corps of Engineers'

(Corps) main missions. However, this authorization bill makes promises to local communities that the Congress does not have a track record of keeping. The House of Representatives took a \$15 billion bill into negotiations with a \$14 billion bill from the Senate and instead of splitting the difference, emerged with a Washington compromise that costs over \$23 billion. This is not fiscally responsible, particularly when local communities have been waiting for funding for projects already in the pipeline. The bill's excessive authorization for over 900 projects and programs exacerbates the massive backlog of ongoing Corps construction projects, which will require an additional \$38 billion in future appropriations to complete.

This bill does not set priorities. The authorization and funding of Federal water resources projects should be focused on those projects with the greatest merit that are also a Federal responsibility. My Administration has repeatedly urged the Congress to authorize only those projects and programs that provide a high return on investment and are within the three main missions of the Corps' civil works program: facilitating commercial navigation, reducing the risk of damage from floods and storms, and restoring aquatic ecosystems. This bill does not achieve that goal. This bill promises hundreds of earmarks and hinders the Corps' ability to fulfill the Nation's critical water resources needs—including hurricane protection for greater New Orleans, flood damage reduction for Sacramento, and restoration of the Everglades—while diverting resources from the significant investments needed to maintain existing Federal water infrastructure. American taxpayers should not be asked to support a pork-barrel system of Federal authorization and funding where a project's merit is an afterthought.

I urge the Congress to send me a fiscally responsible bill that sets priorities. Americans sent us to Washington to achieve results and be good stewards of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars. This bill violates that funda-

mental commitment. For the reasons outlined above, I must veto H.R. 1495.

George W. Bush

The White House,
November 2, 2007.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

October 27

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

October 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Philadelphia, PA, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with Lew Bennett III.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Bryn Mawr, PA, where, at a private residence, he attended a Pennsylvania Victory 2008 reception. Later, he traveled to Cincinnati, OH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteers Sharon and L.C. Nolan. Then, at a private residence, he attended a Chabot-Ohio Victory Committee reception.

In the evening, at the Montgomery Inn Boathouse, the President dropped by a birthday party for Baseball Hall of Famer Johnny Bench. He then returned to Washington, DC.

October 30

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had separate telephone conversations with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and President-elect Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner of Argentina.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to the White House on November 5.